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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 SSO-00 /031 W

-----008206 041305Z /46

P 041216Z DEC 80  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7703

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EO 12065: GDS 12/3/86 (SHLAUDEMAN, HARRY W.) OR-M  
TAGS: SHUM, AR  
SUBJECT: AUGUST 1979 DISAPPEARED: FURTHER INFORMATION

REF: (A) BUENOS AIRES 1885; (B) B.A. 1795; (C) B.A. 1373;  
(D) B.A. 1273; (E) B.A. 1185

1. S - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. AS THE DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL, FIVE PEOPLE WHO DISAPPEARED IN AUGUST, 1979 BEGAN COMMUNICATING WITH, AND IN THREE CASES, ACTUALLY VISITING THEIR FAMILIES, BEGINNING IN DECEMBER, 1979. IN FEBRUARY, 1980 THE VISITS AND THEN THE COMMUNICATIONS WERE INTERRUPTED AND HAVE NOT RESUMED. BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE AND INFORMATION DEVELOPED FROM ONE SOURCE IN THE ARMY SECURITY SERVICE, WE CONCLUDED AT THE TIME THAT THE FIVE WERE PROBABLY KILLED BY THEIR CAPTORS, AN INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION IN THE ARGENTINE ARMY.

3. MOST OF WHAT WE KNEW ABOUT THAT INCIDENT CAME FROM THE FAMILY OF ONE OF THE COMMUNICATING DISAPPEARED WHO CONTACTED THE EMBASSY AFTER THEIR SON, FERNANDO BRODSKY, BROKE OFF COMMUNICATION. HOWEVER, NOW RAQUEL HASSAN, THE MOTHER OF ANOTHER OF THE LAST AUGUST'S COMMUNICATING DISAPPEARED, HAS DESCRIBED HER EXPERIENCE TO THE EMBASSY.

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4. MRS. HASSAN SAID THAT:  
-- HER SON, JOSE, FIRST BEGAN CALLING HOM ON DECEMBER 24. THEY SPOKE REGULARLY BY PHONE EVERY WEDNESDAY AFTER THAT UNTIL

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ON FEBRUARY 2, HE ACTUALLY VISITED HER HOME.

-- HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, JOSEFINA VILLAFLO DE HASSAN, WHO WAS ALSO ARRESTED LAST AUGUST, BEGAN PHONING THE VILLAFLO HOME IN LATE DECEMBER AND MADE HER FIRST VISIT THERE JANUARY 20. AT THAT TIME SHE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY ELSA MARTINEZ DE VILLAFLO, ANOTHER OF THOSE ARRESTED IN AUGUST. AS WE REPORTED EARLIER, THE TWO WOMEN WERE ALLOWED TO VISIT WITH THEIR CHILDREN FOR WHOM THEY BROUGHT SMALL PRESENTS THAT THEY HAD MADE IN THEIR PLACE OF DETENTION. MRS. HASSAN VISITED WITH THE WOMEN AT THE VILLAFLO HOME.

-- JOSE HASSAN, ELSA MARTINEZ DE VILLAFLO AND JOSEFINA VILLAFLO DE HASSAN ALL WERE IN GOOD HEALTH DURING THESE VISITS. THEY SAID THEY WERE WORKING IN OFFICES, WERE WELL TREATED, AND LIVING IN A "RE-EDUCATION CENTER." THEY HAD NO IDEA WHERE THEY WERE BEING HELD AS THEY WERE BLINDFOLDED ON TRIPS TO AND FROM THE DETENTION CENTER. THEY SAID THAT IMMEDIATELY AFTER THEIR DETENTION THEY WERE BADLY TORTURED.

-- THE DETAINEES WERE TREATED AS "TRUSTEES" - ON ONE VISIT, FOR EXAMPLE, THE TWO WOMEN WERE DROPPED OFF TWO BLOCKS FROM THEIR HOME AND ALLOWED TO WALK THE REST OF THE DISTANCE.

-- THE YOUNG MAN WHO ACCOMPANIED JOSE HASSAN ON HIS FEBRUARY 2 VISIT WAS IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES, VERY RELAXED AND QUITE FRIENDLY. HE TOLD MRS. HASSAN THAT HER SON WAS EXTREMELY LUCKY TO BE ALIVE. HE HAD BEEN A MEMBER OF A CELL OF THE PERONIST ARMED FORCES (FAP - A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION THAT NO LONGER EXISTS). MRS. HASSAN SAID

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THAT IF SO, SHE WAS SURE THAT HE HAD NOT PARTICIPATED IN ANY TERRORIST ACTS. THE YOUNG MAN SAID THAT MIGHT BE TRUE BUT "UNTIL RECENTLY" SIMPLE MEMBERSHIP IN AN ORGANIZATION LIKE FAP MEANT DEATH IF CAUGHT BY THE AUTHORITIES. NOW, HOWEVER, THE FAMILY COULD LOOK FORWARD TO GETTING THEIR SON BACK ONCE HE HAD COMPLETED HIS RE-EDUCATION, A PROCESS THAT WOULD BE SHORTER THAN A JAIL SENTENCE. (AS REFTELS INDICATE, WE HAD LONG BELIEVED THAT THE COMMUNICATING DISAPPEARED ALONG WITH SEVERAL OTHERS PICKED UP AT THE SAME TIME WERE MEMBERS OF A FAP CELL WHICH HAD BECOME DORMANT.)

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-- HER SON'S LAST PHONE CALL TOOK PLACE ON FEBRUARY 16 WHEN HE CALLED TO WISH HIS FATHER HAPPY BIRTHDAY. (ON FEBRUARY 8 HE HAD CALLED TO SAY THAT THE VISITS HOME WOULD BE SUSPENDED FOR A WHILE). THE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW BROKE OFF COMMUNICATION AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME.

5. MRS. HASSAN SAID THAT HER FAMILY HAS NEVER SOUGHT OUTSIDE HELP. SHE AND HER HUSBAND TRIED PRIVATELY AND UNSUCCESSFULLY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEIR SON'S FATE. BUT HER HUSBAND DIED FOUR MONTHS AGO "OF A BROKEN HEART" AND SHE COULD NO LONGER GO ON BE HERSELF WITH THIS PROBLEM. THUS, SHE HAD SPOKEN NOT ONLY WITH THIS EMBASSY, BUT ALSO WITH THE EMBASSY OF ISRAEL AND WITH RABBI MARSHALL MEYER, AN AMERICAN RESIDENT IN BUENOS AIRES.

6. MRS. HASSAN ASKED THAT WE TRY TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO HER SON. WE TOLD HER THAT ON THE BASIS OF EVERYTHING WE KNEW ABOUT THIS AND SIMILAR CASES WE HAVE NO REASON TO ENCOURAGE HER TO BELIEVE THAT HER SON IS STILL ALIVE. HOWEVER, WE HAVE NO POSITIVE PROOF THAT HIS IS DEAD -- SUCH PROOF IS NOT AVAILABLE. MRS. HASSAN SAID THAT OTHERS, INCLUDING RABBI MARSHALL MEYER AND AT LEAST ONE OF THOSE WHO DISAPPEARED WITH HER SON IN AUGUST, AND HAS NOW REAPPEARED, PROFESS TO BELIEVE THAT THIS GROUP IS STILL ALIVE. WE TOLD

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HER WE WOULD AGAIN RAISE THE ISSUE WITH THE GOA.

7. REFTELS CONTAIN FURTHER BACKGROUND ON THIS MATTER.  
SHLAUDEMAN

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